

WHY NOT 'SPRING TRAIN' UP NORTH?

How an Expensive Detail of Major League Baseball Can be Cut Out.

Why should the managers of the professional baseball clubs in New York and Brooklyn particularly, or Boston, Chicago, and Philadelphia, go to training camps in the Southern States when there are as good opportunities for doing the work of preliminary training right here in New York City for at least three Major League teams?

This question has naturally forced itself to the fore since the success of the game at the Seventh Regiment Armory last week between the teams of the Seventh Regiment and Columbia University, in which nine players competed on a side, using a full team instead of the six-man-a-side one commonly played in indoor baseball. The Seventh Regiment Armory is far from being the largest drill hall in the city, for that of the new Twenty-second Regiment Armory far exceeds it in size, while the new Eighth Regiment Armory building at Jerome Avenue and the Kingsbridge Road, at the foot of the Jerome Park storage reservoir, has a drill shed 600 by 300 and 108 feet in the clear, from the centre of the floor to the top of the glass roof apex.

Yet on the restricted floor space of the Seventh Regiment Armory there was something nearly akin to baseball played with all its thrills, its slides to bases, its sharp fielding, and all on a board floor. While a deadened ball and indoor baseball bats were used in that particular game, there seemed no good reason why the regulation ball and bats might not have been used to advantage, as the indoor bats used were smashed by the wholesale. They certainly could be on such floors as are provided in the Twenty-second, the Eighth, the Thirteenth, and Second Naval Battalion in Brooklyn, and others.

Such ample spaces would suggest naturally that the New York clubs, at least, could be saved the expense of the trips to the training camps in Texas, Florida or Georgia, with added benefit to the players in that they would not get back here in early Spring only to be forced to go through a process of re-acclimatization. It has been a constant source of complaint all along the line that when the players return from the warm climate of the Southern States—which is certainly trying and at times enervating to the athletes—it takes about two weeks to get them in trim for playing in the colder climates in which all their games are played, except possibly Cincinnati, where it is notoriously "hot" so far as baseball goes, and as a thermometrical fact warmer even than Washington, which is geographically a little further south.

City armories are now used for athletic meets, fairs and assemblages of various sorts and military. Why not utilize them to train baseball players in during the month or six weeks preceding the opening of the regular season? There are gymnasiums in the armories for physical training, and the streets of New York offer the best training ground in this country for work to reduce weight and increase wind, as is shown by the fact that New York has more "Marathon" races and similar out-of-door races than any other city, and more runners, all of whom do practically all their training on the streets of the city. There would seem to be no better place for a bunch of athletes to do all the reducing work required than in a run, say, from the new Eighth Regiment Armory, through Kingsbridge Road, around the storage reservoir, through Van Cortlandt Park, and then down Jerome Avenue to the armory. The run could be made two miles or ten over unfrequented roads. Similar facilities exist in the vicinity of almost any of the armories about the city.

As to the publicity which is literally the breath of life to baseball, much more would be secured with the teams doing their preparatory work in New York City than in Marlin, Savannah, or any other Southern city, for the "fans" would crowd the galleries of the armories and pay well to see the preliminary workouts of new candidates and the "come-back" work of the veterans, thus making a training season, which has been a source of expence to managers, amounting from \$25,000 to \$40,000 a year, a means of income. With games between picked nines or between "regulars" and "yannigans" the interest of the fans would be kept alive and fanned to Springtime flame, and the playing season actually opened six weeks ahead of the dates of the playing schedule.

Col. Jacob Ruppert, Jr., the all-around sportsman and recent purchaser of the Yankees, admitted that the scheme looked good to him, as a business man, and said he could see no possible objection to this sort of home training and a great many things in its favor as a business as well as a sporting proposition. "While I am a novice at managing a baseball club," he said, "and so should hesitate to propose anything so radical without consulting my associates, I am certainly favorably impressed with such a plan, providing the permission of the military authorities to use the armories could be secured. As we should want the armory only in the daytime—in morning for practice and in the afternoon for games, and so would interfere with no military drills—I cannot see why the State should not lease the armories to baseball managers as they do now to athletic organizations or for fairs or art exhibitions, which do interfere with the uses for which the armories were erected. If I can save something like \$25,000 a year in training expenses and get just as good results I do not see, as a business man, why it is not a good thing. It certainly looks good to me offhand, and unless some one can point out vital objections I am certainly for it, speaking now without consultation with my manager."

One of the Colonel's friends, but not associated with him in the management of the club, though indirectly interested in other sports in which the Colonel continues to take a lively interest, said: "A grand idea and a big money-saver for the much-abused owners. Just think of the gate that would come from the fans who are interested in the creation of a new Yankee team by Wild Bill from the material he will try and whip into shape, with many of them absolutely unknown to the fans of New York City! Their practice games in an afternoon would pack the armories to capacity and create an appetite to see the men in action on the field. It is the best scheme from a New York fan's point of view that has been suggested for baseball in years. Push it along and give us something in the Winter months besides legal wrangles. The building up of a team is the most interesting phase of baseball to the true fan, and they would be for it to a man."

LATE SPORTS ON PAGE 12,

MAIN NEWS SECTION.

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